

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1. (Previously Presented) A wafer processing apparatus including a mini-environment portion having a chamber therein and configured to transfer a wafer between a clean box having a lid and housing the wafer and the chamber, said apparatus comprising:

a first opening portion which is formed on a part of a wall comprising the chamber to be in communication with the chamber, facing an opening of the clean box so as to allow loading and unloading the wafer between the clean box and the mini-environment portion; and

a door that closes, when the transfer of the wafer is not performed, the first opening portion and opens, when the transfer of the wafer is performed,

wherein when the wafer transferring operation is performed, the clean box is fixed with a first clearance around the entire perimeter of the clean box having a predetermined distance between the opening formed plane of the clean box and the outside surface of the part of the wall in which the first opening portion is formed.

Claim 2. (Previously Presented) A wafer processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein when the door is positioned to substantially close the first opening portion, a second clearance through which the chamber and the exterior of the mini-environment portion are in communication with each other exists.

Claim 3. (Previously Presented) A wafer processing apparatus according to claim 2, wherein the second clearance is in communication with the first clearance so as to form a gas flow path from the chamber to the exterior of the mini-environment portion.

Claim 4. (Previously Presented) A wafer processing apparatus including a mini-environment portion having a chamber therein and configured to transfer a wafer between a clean box having a lid and housing the wafer and the chamber, said apparatus comprising:

a first opening portion which is formed on a part of a wall comprising the chamber to be in communication with the chamber, facing an opening of the clean box so as to allow loading and unloading the wafer between the clean box and the mini-environment portion; and

a door that closes, when the transfer of the wafer is not performed, the first opening portion and opens, when the transfer of the wafer is performed,

wherein when the wafer transferring operation is performed, the clean box is fixed with a clearance having a predetermined distance between the opening formed plane of the clean box and the outside surface of the part of the wall in which the first opening portion is formed; and

wherein when the door is positioned to substantially close the first opening portion, a second clearance in the door through which the chamber and the exterior of the mini-environment portion are in communication with each other exists.

Claim 5. (New) A wafer processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein an opening of the first clearance is directed along a direction different from a direction along which the first opening portion faces.

Claim 6. (New) A wafer processing apparatus according to claim 4, wherein an opening of the first clearance is directed along a direction different from a direction along which the first opening portion faces.